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ABSTRACT

This resource directory provides a selective listing of electronic networks, online databases, and bulletin boards that highlight technology-related services and products. For each resource, the following information is provided: name, address, and telephone number; description; target audience; hardware/software needs to access the system; procedures for accessing; and cost. The first section, on electronic networks, describes AppleLink, CompuHelp, CompuServe, DeafTek.USA, SCAN (Shared Communication and Assistance Network), Series Computer Network, and SpecialNet. The second section describe online databases, including AbleData, Apple Solutions, CTG (Closing the Gap) Solutions, Developmental Disabilities Technology Library, Handicapped Users' Database, Hyper-AbleData, Rehabdata, and Specialware Database. Bulletin boards described include BayTalk BBS (Bulletin Board System), Equal BBS, 4 Sights Network, Fidoracer, Project Enable, RESNA.TA, Special Needs BBS, TECH.LINE, and T.U.F. (Total User Friendly) BBS. (JDD)

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DIRECTORY OF ON-LINE NETWORKS, DATABASES AND BULLETIN BOARDS ON ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

NOVEMBER 1990
SECOND EDITION

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INTRODUCTION

RESNA, an interdisciplinary association for the advancement of rehabilitation and assistive technologies was awarded the technical assistance contract by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). The purpose of this contract is to provide technical assistance and information to states on the development and implementation of a consumer-responsive statewide program of technology-related assistance under the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-407).

RESNA will engage in a number of activities over the course of the next three years to assist states in developing and implementing a consumer responsive system of assistive technology services. Technical Assistance will include on-site visits, workshops, meetings and institutes, and the development of information resources which will assist states and organizations. This resource was developed in response to requests by the first nine states funded under the Technology-Related Assistance Act.

This resource product provides information on on-line networks, databases, and bulletin boards which highlight technology-related services and products. It is not intended to be inclusive of all databases since there are so many on-line services available, both nationally and on a local level. But rather, this directory is intended for informational purposes. This product will continue to be updated throughout the three years in an effort to meet the needs of states as they develop their assistive technology services.

The inclusion of a particular resource in this directory does not constitute an endorsement by RESNA or the RESNA TA Project.

This material was developed by the RESNA Technical Assistance Project under a contract with the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), U.S. Department of Education. The content, however, does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of NIDRR/ED and no official endorsement of the material should be inferred.

The RESNA Technical Assistance Project would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for sharing information on this topic: Carrie Brown, The Association for Retarded Citizens of the U.S., Marian Hall, Newington Children's Hospital, and The Center for Special Education Technology.

ELECTRONIC NETWORKS

Electronic networks are interactive systems that link a number of independent computers to a large central or host computer. Most networks will vary in the types of information and services they provide but most will offer two features: electronic mail and bulletin boards. Other features being offered include computer conferencing and database searching.

Wide-area networks vary in size and purpose. A large commercial network such as CompuServe provides a variety of information and services for users. A smaller, more specialized network such as SpecialNet focuses on one area of information of interest to a specific audience.

Special interest groups, sometimes referred to as SIGs or Forums, are common to these larger networks. SIGs provide a way for network users with a common interest to "meet" and share information and ideas within a network.

There are costs associated with being a part of a network. These costs vary considerably. With most networks, a subscription fee is involved. Other charges may include a telephone connect fee and a minimum monthly usage fee. Check with the individual network to see what charges are involved.

APPLELINK
Apple Computer, Inc.
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation
20525 Mariani Avenue, MS 43S
Cupertino, CA 95014
408-974-7910
408-974-7911 (TDD)

Description: a "closed" telecommunications network dedicated to items of interest to individuals using Apple computers. The network offers specific folders, libraries and bulletin boards.

Target audience: Individuals using Apple computers, major customers and developers who have been sponsored by a group or division at Apple Computer, Inc.

Hardware/software needs: Macintosh-based.

How to access: access is limited to sponsored Apple groups such as the RESNA TA Project and National Special Education Alliance sites, organizations and Apple dealers.

Cost: contact Apple Computers at the above address.

COMPUHELP
The National Association of Blind and
Visually Impaired Computer Users, Inc.
P.O. Box 1352
Roseville, CA 95662-1352
916-783-0364

Description: An electronic bulletin board, mail and database system which includes information on products, resources, and publications in braille and on tape.

Target audience: Persons who are blind or visually impaired or other interested persons.

Hardware/Software Needs: Apple II+; GBBS PRO software.

How to access: Dial 916-786-3923; 300 baud; available 24 hours.

Cost: standard phone charges; a $10.00 donation is appreciated.

COMPUSERVE
CompuServe Information Service
5000 Arlington Centre Boulevard
Columbus, OH 43220
800-848-8199
614-457-8600

Description: an electronic network with many bulletin boards and databases. Information can be found on a number of subjects such as the weather, stock market, sports, child care, health care, airline ticket information, and educational and recreational computer programs. CompuServe services providing information on assistive technology and/or disabilities include the Handicapped Users Database, Disabilities Forum, Rehabilitation R&D Database and the Education Forum.

Target audience: individuals interested in telecommunication services such as electronic mail, bulletin boards and online conferencing.

Hardware/software needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: subscription to CompuServe; 1200 or 2400 baud.

Cost: $39.95 to join which includes a $25 usage credit, a free subscription to CompuServe magazine and user's guide. There is also a $1.50 monthly fee plus $12.50 an hour or .12/minute connect charge.

DEAFTEK.USA
International Communications Limited
P.O. Box 81
Fayville, MA 01745
508-620-1777

Description: an electronic mail service which offers private communication and a bulletin board service.

Target audience: designed for but not limited to persons who are hearing impaired.

Hardware/software needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: via Telemail.

Cost: standard phone charges.

SCAN (SHARED COMMUNICATION AND ASSISTANCE NETWORK)
American Association of University Affiliated
Programs for Persons with Developmental Disabilities
8605 Cameron Street, Suite 406
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-588-8252

Description: a wide ranging electronic network with local, state, regional, and national levels that offers mail, file transfers, bulletin boards, and databases.

Target audience: Persons interested in the developmental disabilities field.

Hardware/Software Needs: telecommunications software and modem.

Cost: A one time set up fee of $35.00; a monthly service fee of $6.95; an hourly charge of $17.50 for prime time, and $12.50 non-prime time.

How to access: Call SCAN to get set-up. Access can be local via a telephone network service.

SERIES COMPUTER NETWORK
Ctr. on Human Development, Div. of Special Education and Rehabilitation
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-1211
503-686-3591

Description: a national computer network funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research which links the resources of information providers with the needs of information consumers. The Series Network allows for the dissemination of information in a variety of ways: personal mail, public conferences, group meetings, resource databases, document libraries, software exchanges, and electronic surveys.

Target audience: independent living and rehabilitation organizations and agencies. Subscribers include projects funded by NIDRR, agencies funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, Independent Living Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies, Rehabilitation Engineers, and Rehabilitation Facilities.

Hardware/Software needs: computer, communications software, and a modem.

Cost: no cost, toll-free.

How to access: call Karyn at 800-356-6280 to register.

SPECIALNET
National Association of State Directors
Of Special Education
2021 K Street, NW
Suite 215
Washington, D.C. 20006
800-634-5644

Description: an electronic network devoted to the information needs of special education teachers and administrators. The network includes electronic mail, bulletin boards, databases and conferencing. The use of SpecialNet hookups for professional interchanges within several local agencies is also possible.

Target audience: special educators and administrators.

Hardware/software needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: via local Telenet number.

Cost: several types of subscription plans are available. The basic plan is $200 a year with subscribers billed monthly for connect time. Connect rates vary from $4 per hour during nighttime hours (9pm-7am daily) to $13 during business hours (7am-6pm, Monday thru Friday).

ON-LINE DATABASES

A database is a set of documents organized for easy search and retrieval. The purpose of the database is to archive information and to provide a comprehensive search of information on a particular topic.

ABLEDATA
Newington Children's Hospital
181 East Cedar Street
Newington, CT 06111
203-667-5200

Description: an information source on disability-related products, this database contains over 15,000 commercially available products from over approximately 2,000 manufacturers. Detailed information is provided for products in all aspects of independent living, personal care, transportation, communication, and recreation.

Target audience: individuals interested in assistive technology devices and equipment.

How to access: the database is accessible on-line via BRS Information Technologies, a subscription network service. (Contact BRS at 800-345-4277)

Cost: subscription to BRS is $75 a year plus charges to access the various databases, which range from $20 an hour up to $100 an hour.

APPLE SOLUTIONS
Apple Computer, Inc.
20525 Mariani Avenue, MS 43S
Cupertino, CA 95014
408-974-7910
408-974-7911 (TDD)

Description: database of products and resources for Apple computers. The database contains over 1,000 entries which are updated on a regular basis.

Target audience: persons interested in products for the Apple computer that can be used by persons with disabilities.

Hardware/software needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: Solutions is accessible via AppleLink or SpecialNet.

Cost: standard phone charges.

CTG SOLUTIONS
Closing the Gap, Inc.
P.O. Box 68
Henderson, MN 56044
612-248-3294

Description: a relational database containing information on current products and how to use those products. The database can be customized for local use so that information relating to student/client activities, administrative considerations, etc., can be linked to existing product information.

Target audience: special education and rehabilitation professionals.

Hardware/software needs: Macintosh computer.

How to access: the database is Macintosh-based. Searches are conducted by the subscriber with documentation provided on strategies for searching.

Cost: Annual license fee is $975 including updates.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES TECHNOLOGY LIBRARY
Association for Retarded Citizens of the U.S.
2501 Avenue J
Arlington, TX 76006
817-640-0204 (voice)
817-649-2857 (computer)

Description: a database of information on publications related to rehabilitation technology, resource agencies in the field of disabilities, experts and users of assistive devices, and commercial vendors of assistive technology products.

Target audience: individuals interested in the applications of technology with children and adults with disabilities.

Hardware/software needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: via the DD Connection on the OPUS Network; 817-649-2857; OPUS Net 130, Node 10.

Cost: Standard telephone charges.

HANDICAPPED USERS' DATABASE
CompuServe, Inc.
Rear 4
Furry Court
Lancaster, OH 43130

Description: Database containing information about technology for persons with disabilities.

Target audience: individuals interested in the use of technology for persons with disabilities.

Hardware/software needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: via CompuServe.

Cost: standard phone charges; subscription to CompuServe.

HYPER-ABLEDATA
Trace Research and Development Center
Waisman Center
1500 Highland Avenue
Madison, WI 53705-2280
608-262-6966

Description: a microcomputer-based version of ABLEDATA listing over 17,000 assistive technology products.

Target audience: anyone interested in assistive technology products.

Hardware/software needs: computer with hard disk of at least 26 megabytes to run tape and disk version; or CD-ROM and Macintosh computer.

How to access: searches are conducted by the individual via disk, tape or CD-ROM.

Cost: $50.00 for the CD-ROM Macintosh-based database which covers a 6-month update. $199.00 for floppy disks (33 total); $122 for tape back-up.

REHABDATA
National Rehabilitation Information
Center (NARIC)
8455 Colesville Road
Suite 935
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Description: a database of over 16,000 disability-related documents that allows for custom searches.

Target audience: individuals interested in the field of rehabilitation.

Software/Hardware needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: Accessed within BRS Information Technologies.

Cost: standard phone charges and a subscription to BRS.

SPECIALWARE DATABASE
LINC Resources, Inc.
4820 Indianola Avenue
Columbus, OH 43214
614-263-5462

Description: contains information on descriptions of software programs for special education ranging from early childhood to adult education; mildly disabled to severely disabled; reading to word processing to administration. Database available also on disk and in print formats.

Target audience: individuals interested in software programs for persons with disabilities.

Hardware/software needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: dial 614-433-0851 and follow directions.

Cost: Check with LINC Resources.

BULLETIN BOARDS

Bulletin Boards are public message systems that are used by individuals or agencies to post information. The purpose of a bulletin board is to provide access to current information and the latest developments that may be of interest to multiple users. Information is displayed in a user friendly "menu" format and grouped by subject matter. Depending on what network you use, there are hundreds of bulletin boards available. SpecialNet lists over 50 bulletin boards containing information on topics such as special education software, technology, current legislation, and assessment of students with disabilities. Bulletin boards are usually operated on microcomputers, and many are available at no cost to the user when accessed through a local phone call. School systems and public agencies have supported specialized bulletin boards (BBSs), and some of these have become so popular that they receive calls from all over the country. Most boards are dedicated for 24-hour access, and users often call late at night when long distance charges are lowest. Although membership fees are sometimes required, many BBSs are free and are operated by hobbyists or computer users groups.

BayTalk BBS
Eureka Valley Promotion Association
Box 14137
San Francisco, CA 94114
415-864-6430 (Computer)
415-486-6411
Contact: Donald Belew

Description: a 24-hour a day bulletin board that features programs on computer access, such as talking screen review programs and utilities for those with limited manual dexterity. Application programs and games that work with speech output are featured as well.

Target audience: visually and physically impaired computer users.

Hardware/Software Needs: IBM PC and compatibles; Enable Talking Software; or any telecommunications software.

How to access: via PC Pursuit, Node CA SSA.

Cost: Access is free if you reside in the Bay area. However, donations are welcomed and membership into the Users Group is desirable. Cost of membership is $12.00 a year.

Equal BBS
Michael Bowen
3535 S. Wilminton Street
Office 205
Raleigh, NC 27603
919-851-6806 (computer)

Description: a bulletin board on adaptive hardware and software, and resource information.

Target audience: anyone interested in using technology with disabled persons.

Hardware/Software needs: IBM compatible; FIDO/SEAdog software.

How to access: dial 919-851-6806; FIDO Net 151, Node 101.

Cost: standard phone charges.

4 Sights Network
Greater Detroit Society for
the Blind
16625 Grand River
Detroit, MI 48227
313-272-3900

Description: a bulletin board and database providing information on rehabilitation and educational technology resources including information about hardware and software products.

Target audience: Blind and visually impaired and those who work with this population.

Hardware/Software Needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: dial 313-272-7111; if you are a new user, log on as "new user" and assign yourself a password. Then you become a registered user.

Cost: standard telephone charges.

FIDORACER
Murray State University
2004 University Station
Murray, KY 40271
Contact: Bill Allbritten
502-762-6861
502-762-3140 (Computer)

Description: an electronic mail and bulletin board system on the use of computers by persons with disabilities. There is also some public domain software which users can download.

Target audience: persons interested in the use of technology by persons with disabilities.

Hardware/software needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: dial 502-762-3140; FIDO Net 11, Node 301.

Cost: standard phone charges. No subscription fee.

PROJECT ENABLE
Rehabilitation Technology Associates
West Virginia Research and Training Center
One Dunbar Plaza, Suite E
Dunbar, WV 25064-3098

Description: this bulletin board focus primarily on computer use in administration and management of rehabilitation programs. There is public conferencing available.

Target audience: persons interested in vocational rehabilitation and rehabilitation engineering.

Hardware/software needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: dial 304-766-7843 and follow the instructions.

Cost: standard phone charges. No subscription fee.

RESNA.TA
RESNA Technical Assistance Project
1101 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-857-1140

Description: bulletin board providing an opportunity for states and organizations to share information of interest as they develop and administer assistive technology services. The RESNA Technical Assistance Project is funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research under the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-407).

Target audience: states and organizations interested in assistive technology services.

Hardware/software: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: access is via SpecialNet.

Cost: standard phone charges; subscription to SpecialNet.

Special Needs BBS
2123 Stanton Avenue
Whiting, Indiana 46394
219-659-2010 (Voice/TDD)
219-659-0112 (Computer Only)
300 to 2400 Baud 24 Hours
System Operator: Rick Catania

Description: An electronic computerized medium to exchange, disseminate information for the purpose of promoting the needs of persons with disabilities. message bases, and public domain programs are available.

Targeted audience: Individuals interested in assistive technology and disabilities.

Hardware/software needs: computer, modem, and telecommunications software

How to access: dial (219) 659-0112 and follow instructions

TECH.LINE
Center for Special Education Technology
The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091
703-620-3660
800-873-8255

Description: just one of many national boards on SpecialNet which offers news and information about technology in special education. A different technology topic is highlighted each month.

Target audience: persons interested in special education technology.

Hardware/software needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: via SpecialNet.

Cost: standard telephone charges in addition to subscription to SpecialNet.

T.U.F. (TOTAL FRIENDLY USER) BBS
39-44 24th Street
Apt. 3B
Long Island City, NY 11101
Contact: Greg Trobaugh
718-482-0088
718-482-0089 (Computer)

Description: a bulletin board service designed to provide support to all computer users. Special emphasis is on the use of computers for employment and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities.

Target audience: persons interested in the use of technology, especially in the areas of employment and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

Hardware/software needs: telecommunications software and modem.

How to access: dial 718-482-0089 and follow directions.

Cost: $90.00 membership fee per year plus standard phone charges.

HELPFUL REFERENCES

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